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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the impact of an urban school district's English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) program on 317 participating K-12 language minority students. The study used the Language Assessment Scale (LAS) to examine students' English proficiency after participating in the yearlong program. The LAS measures language skills necessary to succeed in an academic environment. It does not measure achievement in course content. Analysis of students' pretest and posttest scores on the LAS indicated that they made yearly progress in English language proficiency as evidenced by their oral, reading, and writing scores. The gains reached statistically significant levels using both chi-squares and dependent-sample t-tests. The results suggest that the program is successfully meeting the needs of language minority students. (Contains 30 references.) (SM)

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Running Head: LANGUAGE MINORITY STUDENTS

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# Assessing Yearly Progress of Language Minority Students Using Standardized Testing

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Abstract

School districts are reporting increases in English language learners. In fact, in some school districts such as the one that served as research site for this study, ESL students are the fastest growing population. This paper examines the impact of an urban school district English as a Second Language (ESL) program on language minority students (N = 356). The findings showed that there is a yearly progress in the English language proficiency in oral, reading, and writing scores. The gains reached statistically significant levels using both chi-squares and dependent-sample t-tests. The program, based on this data, is successfully meeting the needs of the language minority students of the district under study. Implications for policy and future research are discussed.

Assessing Yearly Progress of Language Minority Students Using Standardized Testing

Diversity is not a new phenomenon in the United States, but never before has the impact of diversity been so intense on the nation's school system. In the twentieth century, diversity is becoming the rule rather than the exception. The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education reports that approximately four million Limited English Proficient (LEP) students are enrolled in public and non-public schools in the United States. This number represents close to 10% of the total school population of this country.

School districts are reporting increases in LEP student enrollments of 10-25% in the last decade; by contrast, the overall student population increased by approximately one percent annually (Anstrom, 1996). According to Takaki (1993), it is estimated that by the year 2056 most Americans will trace their descent to almost everywhere but white Europe. In this regard, the needs of the LEP are now considered a priority across the nation public schools. Language minority students are expected to become mainstream, but educators are not prepared to deal with instructional requirements of diverse learners. Collaboration is a must (Fradd, 1992).

Kentucky is not an exception to the trend at the national level. As of 2000, one third of the 176 school districts in the state had students who came from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (approximately 4000 students who are speakers of over 70 different languages. Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) have the largest number of LEP students in a single district (2000 students) with speakers of over 41 languages. In JCPS, several new English as a Second Language (ESL) sites have been

opened to accommodate the growing number of this student population, including more than 40 ESL certified teachers and more than 40 bilingual associate instructors.

## Theories of Second Language Acquisition

The research upon which most ESL practices are based comes primarily from the work of Krashen, Cummins, and De Avila, Cervantes, and Duncan. Krashen's theory (1997) of second language acquisition suggests that a second language is most successfully acquired when the conditions are similar to those present in the first language acquisition, that is, when the focus of instruction is on meaning rather than on form. He characterizes language "learning" as knowledge about the language, rather than knowing how to communicate in that language. Acquisition is a natural process which takes place when the "affective filter" (i.e., the psychological barrier caused by fear of having to perform) is not activated.

Cummins (1981; 1999; 2000) argues about two types of language proficiency: Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). A student in early stages of BICS may be able to follow simple listening, reading, and writing activities, and begin to participate in interpersonal conversations about various topics (e.g., movies, holidays, school activities). When the student begins to acquire CALP, he/she can engage in more involved discussions about school subjects and participate in more cognitively demanding activities within the school setting. For example, a student who uses his/her BICS with peers and in some classroom discussions may seem fluent to a teacher; however, the student may still need to be in ESL classes for academic support.

According to the author, under best circumstances, it may take up to three years for a language minority student to acquire BICS and between five and seven years to acquire CALP. When the student reaches any stage of CALP development, he/she is ready to exit the ESL program (Cummins, 1980). In the past decade, Cummins' research (initially reported in 1981) has been replicated and expanded in a series of studies by Collier and Thomas (Collier, 1995; Thomas and Collier, 1999).

De Avila, Cervantes, and Duncan (1978) developed the probabilistic approach. The researchers reasoned that children should be considered as eligible for program entry whenever their English proficiency is significantly below that of their English monolingual peers. By extension, the authors argued that children should remain in programs until such time as their expected level of academic achievement or probability of success is indistinguishable from that of mainstream children. Or conversely, until such time as expected failure cannot be attributed to limitations in language proficiency. The logic of the argument followed from the Lau versus Nichols decision (1974) that reasoned that children were failing because they did not understand what was taking place in the classroom.

In summary, in the past three decades, linguistics and cognitive psychologists have made considerable progress in understanding first and second language acquisition. Cummins (2000) and Minami & Ovando (1995) provide extensive examination of this field of research. What is clear is that language diversity has a strong influence on the content and process of schooling practices for language minority students as well as language-majority students in the nation. There is no single model for addressing the cognitive, linguistic, and cultural needs of all language minority students (Ovando, 2001).

ESL Programs

ESL programs focuses on teaching students English using a variety of instructional strategies to convey academic content in the absence of native language teaching (Walling, 1993). ESL teachers provide instruction for groups of students from mixed language background in the same classroom.

In most cases, students who enroll in an ESL program belong to one of the following categories: (a) refugees, (b) immigrants or (c) foreign exchange students. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), refugees are people who flee their home country in fear of their lives and their families. Their destinies are linked to international politics and they may wait for months or years in refugee camps before they are sent somewhere else. CAL defines immigrants as those people who also come from another country, but they make a conscious decision to leave their native land or may change their mind altogether about emigrating. Foreign exchange students come to a new country in order to learn more about its people and to improve or learn English; in most cases, they stay no longer than a year.

Upon entering a school in the United States, these types of students will face a variety of difficulties which they will have to overcome to adapt to the new environment. The most common factor that affects ESL students learning is the linguistic isolation. The older the student, the longer it usually takes to acquire the language.

One of the main goals of an ESL program is to teach students English. Key elements include maintaining and producing academic progress, providing for the students integration into the mainstream of school, and validating and preserving the students' native language and culture (Walling, 1993). Some ESL students need to

acquire "school skills" as well, particularly refugee youngsters, whose schooling may have been interrupted for a prolonged period of time or may never have attended a school. In addition, parent involvement is an integral part of a successful ESL program. Involving parents of ESL students is important not only for their academic success, but also for supporting the family's integration into a larger society and for validating their native language and culture.

Equity concerns are not limited to how educators and professional specialists categorize students based on language differences. They extend to how students feel about other students and themselves. Students who speak a socially favored language may view their language minority peers as linguistically deficient. Equity also relates referrals to special education and language proficiency. Limited proficiency, when evidenced only in one of the languages, cannot be used as the basis for a referral to special education. Barrera (1995) argues that the effect of disabilities, when present, will exhibit across languages. Linguistic minority students have the chance of being victims of misclassification and misplacement in special education. According to Gersten and Jimenez (1998), the reasons for misplacement include inappropriate assessment instruments and the lack of bilingual special education teaching staff and materials. In the area of ESL teaching combined with special education, many of the problems with placement of students and of providing appropriate services for them stem from a lack of knowledge between the two disciplines (VanLoenen, 1994). Collaboration between ESL teachers and special education teachers is a positive strategy to approach the problem. For students who come from non-English speaking backgrounds, an active, hands-on teaching style is needed, with frequent checking for understanding (Ovando, 2001).

Some Elements of the Legal Context

The 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in the operation of all federally-assisted programs. Under this law, schools must provide any alternative language program necessary to ensure that national origin minority students with LEP have meaningful access to the schools' program.

Lau versus Nichols Supreme Court Decision of 1974 established the fact that a school cannot claim to provide equal access to LEP students by providing them with the same services provided to other children (Nuttall, 1984). The Supreme Court ruled that San Francisco schools had discriminated against Chinese students (Walling, 1993).

The 1981 Castaneda versus Pickard Supreme Court Decision established three standards for determining compliance with Title VII (currently Title III) regulations. The three part approach includes (a) soundness of educational approach, (b) proper implementation, and (c) program evaluation necessary to ensure that language minority students with LEP have meaningful access to schools' programs.

Finally, the new federal legislation has put the language minority students at center stage. On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. The Act is the most sweeping reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since ESEA was enacted in 1965. It redefines the federal role in K-12 education and will help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers. The limited language proficient students are one of the critical groups for which assessment of yearly progress and data disaggregation is required by law. By 2014, the federal government has set targets for school districts across the nation.

## Language Proficiency Defined

Language proficiency has been variously defined as consisting of input-output, receptive and productive skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These are the principal skills used to categorize students as Non-English, Limited, and Fluent speakers. There is a strong relationship between oral language proficiency and academic performance (De Avila, Cervantes, & Duncan, 1978). Subsequently, Cummins (1984) showed that the quality of first language development was directly associated with "readiness" for mainstream schooling.

Currently, there is little doubt that language proficiency is in itself important in the development of school success. Some researchers have found oral language development as a predictor of subsequent success in learning to read (Snow et al, 1998). In fact, knowing that a student is linguistically proficient means that he/she is able to benefit from instruction in the language of the classroom.

Language proficiency needs to be tested. Testing for purposes of accountability has played a significant role in education in the last decades. The use and mastery of language is critical for school success. For instance, language acquisition in early childhood provides the basis for all subsequent psychosocial and educational development. If language proficiency is not assessed, it will affect other dimensions of learning (Spolsky, 1992).

Based on the literature review and on the need to evaluate the ESL services, a program evaluation was conducted to assess yearly progress of participating students.

## Method

*Participants*

Three hundred and fifty six ESL students were involved in this study. Complete demographic information was available for 317 students. Most of the students were on free/reduced lunch status (88%), high school students (59%), and living with both father and mother (62%). In terms of gender, the participants showed a basically equal distribution. Table 1 provides additional information about the participants.

Table 1

Student Profile of the Participants in the ESL Program (N = 317)

| Variable | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | |
| Female | 148 | 47% |
| Male | 169 | 53% |
| **School Level** | | |
| Elementary (Grades 3-5) | 56 | 18% |
| Middle (Grades 6-8) | 73 | 23% |
| High (Grades 9-12) | 186 | 59% |
| Special Education | 2 | <1% |
| **Family Structure** | | |
| Single Parent | 121 | 38% |
| Dual Parent | 196 | 62% |
| **Lunch Status** | | |
| Free | 221 | 70% |
| Reduced | 55 | 18% |
| Pay | 41 | 12% |

*Instrumentation*

The Language Assessment Scale (LAS) is a battery of tests used to assess language proficiency in English. The LAS represents a convergent approach to language assessment in which the total score is based on a combination of discrete-point subtest-items and integrative or holistic subtests. According to Davies (1978, 1990), the most satisfactory view of language testing and the most useful kind of language tests are a combination of these two views. It is intended to be developmentally, linguistically, and psychometrically appropriate for children. The LAS family of tests were developed in four steps, namely (a) blue print specification and item development, (b) tryout and field testing, (c) analyses and item selection, and (d) final production. It includes oral, reading, and writing components. The LAS Oral and the LAS Reading/Writing family of tests represents a comprehensive set of measures designed to assess the probability of success in an American mainstream classroom.

The LAS English measures language skills necessary to succeed in an academic environment. The LAS is not an achievement test in the strict sense and does not attempt to measure achievement in course content, specific ESL objectives or minimal competencies as contained in any particular curriculum. It is intended to be "curriculum free" and sufficiently "robust" to accommodate any approach to the acquisition of English. In this sense, LAS is an ability test and a performance test that can be used as (a) diagnostic device (i.e., to provide identification, placement, and reclassification information for language minority students) and (b) to evaluate progress at both student and program level. For more details, please refer to the technical reports (De Avila & Duncan, 1990, 2000; Duncan & De Avila, 1988).

*Design and Procedure*

The study was quantitative in nature. Descriptive and inferential statistical were used to analyze the data. In specific, chi-square tests were used with categorical variables and dependent-samples t-tests used with continuous scores. The alpha level was set at the .05 level. In total, fourteen analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.1.

## Assessment of Yearly Progress Using LAS

**ANALYSIS 1:**
**CROSS TABULATION OF PRE-POST COUNTS BY ORAL LEVELS**

| | | 02 LASOral level | | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 01 LAS Oral level | 1 | 53 | 52 | 18 | 8 | 1 | 132 |
| | 2 | 8 | 24 | 43 | 18 | 6 | 99 |
| | 3 | 3 | 13 | 20 | 26 | 22 | 84 |
| | 4 | | 2 | 7 | 11 | 21 | 41 |
| Total | | 64 | 91 | 88 | 63 | 50 | 356 |

While on the year 2001, no students were on the fifth category, by the year 2002, 50 students reached the highest level of English proficiency. In addition, the number of students of the first category, significantly decreased by the year 2002. As presented on the table below, the differences reached statistically significant levels at .001 alpha level.

**ANALYSIS 2:**
**NON-PARAMETRIC STATISTICAL ANALYSIS BY ORAL LEVELS**

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 190.937 | 12 | .000 |

**ANALYSIS 3:**

**CROSS TABULATION OF PRE-POST COUNTS BY READING LEVELS**

| | | LAS Reading 02 level | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| LAS Reading 01 level | 1 | 84 | 56 | 25 | 165 |
| | 2 | 20 | 90 | 79 | 189 |
| | 3 | | | 2 | 2 |
| Total | | 104 | 146 | 106 | 356 |

While on the year 2001, only two students were on the third category, by the year 2002, 106 students reached the highest level of reading English proficiency. In addition, the number of students of the first category, decreased by the year 2002. As presented on the table below, the differences reached statistically significant levels at .001 alpha level.

**ANALYSIS 4:**

**NON-PARAMETRIC STATISTICAL ANALYSIS BY READING LEVELS**

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 78.812 | 4 | .000 |

**ANALYSIS 5:**

**CROSS TABULATION OF PRE-POST COUNTS BY WRITING LEVELS**

| | | LAS Writing 02 level | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| LAS Writing 01 level | 1 | 63 | 103 | 12 | 178 |
| | 2 | 7 | 140 | 28 | 175 |
| | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Total | | 71 | 244 | 41 | 356 |

While on the year 2001, three students were on the third category, by the year 2002, 41 students reached the highest level of English proficiency in writing. In addition, the number of students of the first category, significantly decreased by the year 2002. As presented on the table below, the differences reached statistically significant levels at .001 alpha level.

**ANALYSIS 6:**

**NON-PARAMETRIC STATISTICAL ANALYSIS BY WRITING LEVELS**

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 58.552 | 4 | .000 |

**ANALYSIS 7:**

**COMPARISON OF PRE-POST MEANS ON LAS ORAL, READING, AND WRITING SCORES**

| | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pair 1** | 01 LAS Oral | 59.58 | 356 | 19.148 |
| | 02 LAS Oral | 72.25 | 356 | 14.069 |
| **Pair 2** | LAS Read 01 | 55.03 | 356 | 19.710 |
| | LAS Read 02 | 65.46 | 356 | 22.516 |
| **Pair 3** | LAS Write 01 | 52.17 | 356 | 18.113 |
| | LAS Write 02 | 63.47 | 356 | 13.779 |

The oral, reading, and writing tests showed a positive gain in scores when the students were pre- and post-tested. The difference reached statistically significant levels across the three domains tested to the ESL students that participated in this research.

**ANALYSIS 8:**

**STATISTICAL COMPARISON OF PRE-POST MEANS ON LAS ORAL, READING, AND WRITING SCORES (PAIRED-SAMPLE T-TEST)**

| | | Paired Differences Mean | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pair 1** | **01 LAS Oral – 02 LAS Oral** | -12.67 | -17.590 | 355 | .000 |
| **Pair 2** | **LAS Read 01 – LAS Read 02** | -10.43 | -10.394 | 355 | .000 |
| **Pair 3** | **LAS Write 01 – LAS Write 02** | -11.31 | -12.551 | 355 | .000 |

**ANALYSIS 9:**

**COMPARISON OF PRE-POST MEANS ON LAS ORAL, READING, AND WRITING SCORES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (GRADE 3-5)**

**Paired Samples Statistics**

| SCHOOLEV | | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary Schools | Pair 1 | LASO01S | 68.95 | 56 | 8.660 | 1.157 |
| | | LASO02S | 83.00 | 56 | 9.865 | 1.318 |
| | Pair 2 | LASR01S | 54.36 | 56 | 13.179 | 1.761 |
| | | LASR02S | 72.82 | 56 | 15.480 | 2.069 |
| | Pair 3 | LASW01S | 51.00 | 56 | 20.203 | 2.700 |
| | | LASW02S | 66.89 | 56 | 16.234 | 2.169 |

The oral, reading, and writing tests showed a positive gain in scores when the elementary school students were pre- and post-tested. The difference reached statistically significant levels across the three domains tested to the ESL students that participated in this research.

**ANALYSIS 10:**

**STATISTICAL COMPARISON OF PRE-POST MEANS ON LAS ORAL, READING, AND WRITING SCORES (PAIRED-SAMPLE T-TEST) FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (GRADE 3-5)**

**Paired Samples Test**

| | | | Paired Differences | | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| SCHOOLEV | | | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Elementary Schools | Pair 1 | LASO01S - LASO02S | -14.05 | 10.134 | 1.354 | -16.77 | -11.34 | -10.377 | 55 | .000 |
| | Pair 2 | LASR01S - LASR02S | -18.46 | 15.733 | 2.102 | -22.68 | -14.25 | -8.782 | 55 | .000 |
| | Pair 3 | LASW01S - LASW02S | -15.89 | 20.811 | 2.781 | -21.47 | -10.32 | -5.715 | 55 | .000 |

**ANALYSIS 11:**

**COMPARISON OF PRE-POST MEANS ON LAS ORAL, READING, AND WRITING SCORES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS (GRADE 6-8)**

**Paired Samples Statistics**

| SCHOOLEV | | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Middle Schools | Pair 1 | LASO01S | 62.33 | 73 | 18.988 | 2.222 |
| | | LASO02S | 72.71 | 73 | 14.523 | 1.700 |
| | Pair 2 | LASR01S | 52.95 | 73 | 19.046 | 2.229 |
| | | LASR02S | 62.33 | 73 | 22.356 | 2.617 |
| | Pair 3 | LASW01S | 48.08 | 73 | 19.721 | 2.308 |
| | | LASW02S | 61.89 | 73 | 12.860 | 1.505 |

The oral, reading, and writing tests showed a positive gain in scores when the middle school students were pre- and post-tested. The difference reached statistically significant levels across the three domains tested to the ESL students that participated in this research.

**ANALYSIS 12:**

**STATISTICAL COMPARISON OF PRE-POST MEANS ON LAS ORAL, READING, AND WRITING SCORES (PAIRED-SAMPLE T-TEST) FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS (GRADE 6-8)**

**Paired Samples Test**

| | | | Paired Differences | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| SCHOOLEV | | | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | Lower | Upper | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| Middle Schools | Pair 1 | LASO01S - LASO02S | -10.38 | 12.245 | 1.433 | -13.24 | -7.53 | -7.245 | 72 | .000 |
| | Pair 2 | LASR01S - LASR02S | -9.38 | 21.187 | 2.480 | -14.33 | -4.44 | -3.784 | 72 | .000 |
| | Pair 3 | LASW01S - LASW02S | -13.81 | 14.772 | 1.729 | -17.25 | -10.36 | -7.987 | 72 | .000 |

**ANALYSIS 13:**

**COMPARISON OF PRE-POST MEANS ON LAS ORAL, READING, AND WRITING SCORES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS (GRADE 6-8)**

**Paired Samples Statistics**

| SCHOOLEV | | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| High Schools | Pair 1 | LASO01S | 55.53 | 186 | 21.309 | 1.562 |
| | | LASO02S | 69.30 | 186 | 13.375 | .981 |
| | Pair 2 | LASR01S | 55.81 | 186 | 20.625 | 1.512 |
| | | LASR02S | 65.73 | 186 | 22.581 | 1.656 |
| | Pair 3 | LASW01S | 53.96 | 186 | 16.912 | 1.240 |
| | | LASW02S | 62.89 | 186 | 14.048 | 1.030 |

The oral, reading, and writing tests showed a positive gain in scores when the high school students were pre- and post-tested. The difference reached statistically significant levels across the three domains tested to the ESL students that participated in this research.

**ANALYSIS 14:**

**STATISTICAL COMPARISON OF PRE-POST MEANS ON LAS ORAL, READING, AND WRITING SCORES (PAIRED-SAMPLE T-TEST) FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS (GRADE 6 THROUGH 8)**

**Paired Samples Test**

| | | | Paired Differences | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| SCHOOLEV | | | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | Lower | Upper | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| High Schools | Pair 1 | LASO01S - LASO02S | -13.77 | 15.057 | 1.104 | -15.95 | -11.59 | -12.471 | 185 | .000 |
| | Pair 2 | LASR01S - LASR02S | -9.91 | 15.392 | 1.129 | -12.14 | -7.69 | -8.784 | 185 | .000 |
| | Pair 3 | LASW01S - LASW02S | -8.93 | 16.703 | 1.225 | -11.35 | -6.51 | -7.291 | 185 | .000 |

## Discussion

Language proficiency needs to be tested. Testing for purposes of accountability has played a significant role in education in the last decades. This is becoming even more important in light of the recent legislation. On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. The Act is the most sweeping reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since ESEA was enacted in 1965. It redefines the federal role in K-12 education and will help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers. It is based on four basic principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work.

The use and mastery of language is critical for school success. The findings showed that there is a yearly progress in the English language proficiency of the participating students. In oral, reading, and writing, the participating 2002 ESL students improved in their test scores when compared to the previous year (2001). The gains reached statistically significant levels using both chi-squares and dependent-sample t-tests. The program, based on this data, is successfully meeting the needs of the language minority students of the district that served as research site for this study.

The next step is to conduct school level and classroom. We are coming to a time when determining effective ESL teaching is becoming a problem for educational research. New approaches have been developed in the last decade, especially in the area of developments in using student achievement data. Using student assessment data in the

evaluation of teachers has become a major theme in the educational research community (Millman, 1997). Prime examples in this arena are the Dallas value-added accountability system and the Tennessee value-added assessment system. Teacher evaluation and student achievement are becoming two intertwined concepts.

In the value-added framework, an effective teacher is defined as a teacher that causes student improvement on core content educational outcomes such as reading. The central objective of identifying effective teachers becomes one of establishing legitimate predictions of student performance and comparing those predictions to actual student outcomes (Millman, 1997). The teacher effectiveness methodology defines a teacher' effectiveness as being associated with exceptional measured performance above or below that would be expected from the students across the district. Procedures involve using regression analysis, hierarchical linear models, and/or mixed effect models to compute prediction equations by grade level for each outcome variable and then using these equations within classrooms to obtain gains over or below expectations.

Further research needs to address the gains in English language proficiency at the school and at the classroom level. Also, future research needs to analyze the gains on students coming from different home languages. Finally, the expected gains could be compared with actual gains to address the challenges of the value-added education framework (Millman, 1997).

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